

Paseo Vista park wins Valley Forward, SRP landscaping award

Crescordia Award honors harmonious design

By Weldon B. Johnson

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For Esther Winkelmann, Chandler's Paseo Vista Recreation Area is a nice place to take her grandchildren, or her dog, to play.

The fact that the park has won awards for its environmentally friendly design is just an added bonus.

The Valley Forward Association, in partnership with Salt River Project, presented the park the Crescordia Award in park site design and landscape earlier this month. Crescordia is a Greek term that means to grow in harmony. The park was one of 21 first-place winners in various categories at Valley Forward's 30th annual Environmental Excellence Awards.

The park received a similar honor from the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association earlier this year.

"It's good that they were able to do this," Winkelmann said while keeping a watchful eye on her grandsons. "It was a pretty big dump and it took a while for it to be turned into this. We've only been here a few times, but we like it here now. I really like the dog park."

The Paseo Vista Recreation Area is a 64-acre park built on what used to be a landfill at the northwestern corner of

McQueen and Ocotillo roads. The park features a variety of recreational offerings, including a disc golf course, an archery range and Winkelmann's favorite dog park in addition to more traditional amenities such as playground equipment and picnic tables.

The park cost \$12.8 million and was funded through a 2004 bond.

Paseo Vista was honored for its reclamation of the landfill and for effectively demonstrating the reuse of materials.

The park's parking lots are made up of recycled asphalt with old railroad ties being used to frame parking spaces. Concrete from old sidewalks was used in fashioning decorative retaining walls and curbs. The archery range uses old tires as a backstop.

The new park, which opened earlier this year, retained more than 200 trees from the perimeter of the old landfill and added an additional 65 trees salvaged from another park project.

Paseo Vista is the second Chandler project to receive a Crescordia Award in the past three years. The Chandler Heights Community Facilities Project, which includes Veterans Oasis Park at Chandler Heights and Lindsay roads, was honored in 2008.

Photo, background of the park, Page 8

LANDMARK:

Paseo Vista Recreation Area.

Where is it?

3850 S. McQueen Road, at Ocotillo Road

When did it open?

January 2010.

Who owns it?

Chandler.

What is it?

64-acre park that includes a dog park, archery range, disc golf course, picnic areas and playground equipment.

Background:

It would be easy to drive past Paseo Vista Recreation Area without really knowing what's there. The park's amenities are more than three stories above street level. It sits on top of what used to be a working landfill for almost 30 years.

The landfill stopped accepting trash five years ago, and since then that refuse has been topped with more than 300,000 cubic yards of dirt. An additional 200,000 tons of

dirt were added to the site for landscaping or aesthetic purposes.

Because of what lies underneath, Paseo Vista does not have some of the amenities visitors to such a large park might expect such as basketball or tennis courts (due to weight) or large grassy areas (because of the irrigation required). As a result, planners were creative in developing the space and it has some features not found at other city parks, such as the archery range.

Since it opened, the park has become popular with families looking for a place to play and fitness buffs who challenge the steep slopes of the park either on foot or bicycle.

There is another benefit to the park's being constructed on top of a landfill. The 64-acre park is high above the noise of street level and provides spectacular views of the Southeast Valley.



VALLEY

Built atop an old landfill, Chandler's Paseo Vista Recreation Area is high above the noise of street level.